



Canton's Official Publication

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and His Cabinet

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Ward Council Members

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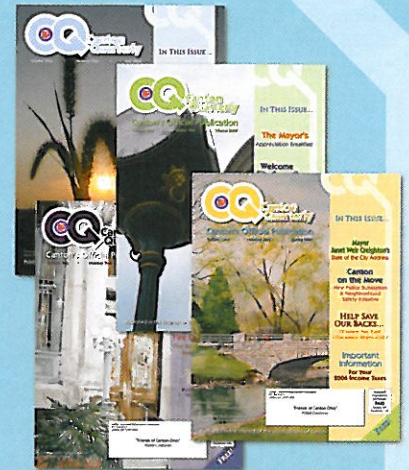
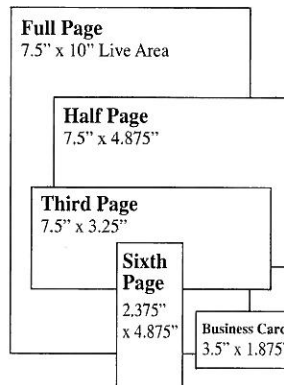
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Here are the rules:

1. You must be a resident of the City of Canton.
2. One submission per person, per year.
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What is a Watershed?

After more than 10 years of experience in the storm water and drainage engineering field ("hydraulics engineering" for those technical people out there), I've come to the conclusion that many people do not know what a "watershed" is. I've heard many different descriptions, some of them admittedly comical.

Speaking in terms of drainage, what is a watershed? Is it a floating storage building out on a lake? Is it a spring house (like Barker Spring House on Monument Rd.) where people can fill containers with artesian well water? A sprinkler system? A faucet? A lake? A catch basin? A leaky pipe? I've heard all of these and more...

The fact is a watershed is the area of land that water drains across to get to a particular point of interest, such as a stream, lake, catch basin, or just an arbitrary point of interest along, say, a property line. Since the world is not flat, water naturally drains in many directions (engineering degree not required). As a result, watersheds come in a variety of shapes and sizes and have many different features. The term "watershed" is also synonymous with "drainage area". For example, depending on where the point of interest is, a watershed can be relatively small (such as the area of your house, yard, driveway, and street that drains to a particular catch basin in front of your house). In this case, the point of interest is the catch basin and the contributing watershed or drainage area may only be about 10,000 sq. ft. Or a watershed can be very large (such as the entire area in the eastern portions

of the City of Canton and surrounding areas that drain to the confluence of the East Branch of the Nimishillen Creek with the Middle Branch of the Nimishillen Creek). In this case, the point of interest is the confluence and the contributing watershed is roughly 50 square miles, because it also includes the City of Louisville and portions of Nimishillen, Plain, and Osnaburg Townships and the Village of East Canton. If one wanted to think about the entire Mississippi River watershed, the point of interest would be the mouth of Mississippi River where it empties into the Gulf of Mexico. In that case, the watershed would include much of the eastern half of the United States. Depending on the point of interest, the size of the watershed changes.

An interesting fact about Stark County is that the "Continental Divide" runs through it, particularly northern Lake Township. What is the Continental Divide? Well clearly it must have something to do with watersheds, right? The Continental Divide (in Ohio) is the natural dividing line (or watershed boundary) in which water on the north side of the line drains north and water on the south side of the line drains south. A person could stand on the Continental Divide and pour a glass of water on each side of it. If evaporation and ground infiltration could be neglected, the water would drain north and south, respectively, and ultimately reach either Lake Erie or the Gulf of Mexico. The City of Canton is south of Continental Divide, so Canton is part of the Nimishillen Creek watershed, which is part of the Tuscarawas River Watershed, which is part of the Muskingum River Watershed, which is part of the Ohio River Watershed, which is ultimately part of the Mississippi River Watershed...get it?

Everyone lives in a watershed. The guy who built his house on a hill to avoid

drainage problems is in a watershed just like the guy at the bottom. You and everyone in your watershed are part of the watershed community. You influence what happens in your watershed, good or bad, by how you treat the natural resources – the soil, water, air, plants and animals. What happens in your watershed also affects the larger watershed downstream. Development without storm water management sends additional runoff downstream quicker, which can cause flooding, erosion and failure of culverts, bridges and dams. Polluted runoff in one watershed ends up in another. In Canton, the cigarette butt that gets thrown out of a car window onto the street often ends up washing into a storm sewer. That storm sewer ends up dumping into the Nimishillen Creek. So the cigarette butt, as we've learned, could ultimately end up making its way to the Gulf of Mexico. That is, unless it's eaten along the way by a fish that ends up being caught and eaten by you. See how this works? Think about the quality of life you want for yourselves and others and how your actions within your watershed can make a difference.



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